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SUBJECT: DAS BRYZA MEETS WITH OSCE AMBASSADOR REEVE

Classified By: CDA Mark X. Perry, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: In a July 27 meeting with DAS Bryza, OSCE Ambassador Roy Reeve said that the Georgians have rejected a Spanish proposal to allow Reeve to continue on as "Acting" Head of Mission until his successor is found. Reeve said his last day as OSCE Ambassador to Georgia will be Tuesday, July 31. Reeve also told Bryza that the situation in South Ossetia has been calm, though the atmosphere remains tense. OSCE monitors have found new holes in the water pipeline that supplies drinking water to Tskhinvali and the city was once again without water. Reeve said he feared South Ossetian defacto president Kokoiti would retaliate by cutting off water to Georgian villages in the next few days unless water to Tskhinvali was restored. (Note: an OSCE official told us on July 31 that the Georgians had repaired the holes and water was flowing to Tskhinvali. End Note.) The economic rehabilitation projects are going well, though Reeve said one of the challenges for OSCE will be to coordinate with the unilateral projects Georgia is funding through Sanakoyev. The next Joint Control Commission (JCC) meeting will be August 9-10 in Tbilisi, and Reeve said the OSCE will try to get the sides to agree on demilitarization steps within the conflict zone. He said Georgia has been building professional trenches with mortar platforms and JPKF patrols have discovered anti-personnel mines around the Georgian village of Avnevi. Reeve noted that the recent initiatives by the Georgian government to determine autonomous status for South Ossetia within a united Georgia were good, but they needed to slow the process down and ensure they include ethnic South Ossetians. End Summary.

Reeve leaving Mission on July 31

12. (C) Reeve said the Georgian government rejected a last minute push by the Spanish to extend Reeve's term as OSCE Ambassador, informing a Spanish delegation on July 26 that there was no flexibility in Georgia's position and Ambassador Reeve would have to leave when his term ends on July 31. Reeve said that President Saakashvili had already informed OSCE Chairman-in-Office (CIO) Moratinos this prior to the attempted Spanish intervention, but the Spanish delegation apparently did not receive the message. Interviews for his replacement will begin in early September, and Deputy HoM Veselin Nikolaev will serve as Acting Head of Mission until Reeve's successor arrives.

South Ossetia calm...but tense

13. (C) The situation in South Ossetia has been calm over the past two weeks, Reeve said, though the atmosphere remains tense. Tskhinvali was once again without water on July 27, due to newly punctured holes in the Georgian portion of the water pipeline, and Reeve said he feared the defacto authorities would cut off water to Georgian villages unless water to Tskhinvali was restored within the next two days.

DAS Bryza asked what obstacles to solving the water problems.

Reeve said that the main questions concerned organizing and managing the water system. Both sides have been "playing games" with the water, the repairs were not well done and there is no supervision of the pipeline. He characterized the water issue as a public relations opportunity missed by Sanakoyev, who could have repaired them well the first time and claimed credit for keeping the water flowing. Reeve said that there would be an August 2 Steering Committee meeting in Tskhinvali to discuss both short and long-term solutions to

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the water issue.

14. (C) Reeve said the economic rehabilitation projects were going well, with a lot of activity on the ground. Reeve said that the problem was coordinating OSCE's projects with the unilateral projects Georgia is funding through Sanakoyev. Sanakoyev wants to build a hospital in Kurta, he said, but OSCE is already renovating the Tskhinvali hospital, and the region does not need two. Reeve estimated that the Georgians have already given 7,000,000 Euros to Sanakoyev for projects in the Georgian-controlled villages. Both the Georgians and the Russians have given 50,000 Euros each to the OSCE projects. Russians gave 3,000,000 Euros to the defacto authorities last year in the run-up to South Ossetian elections, but Reeve said the Russians were not happy with the projects, and he believed they would be less inclined to fund unilateral projects in the future. He added that the new South Ossetian bypass road was impressive, five lanes wide, capable of transporting heavy equipment through the hilly terrain, and clearly Russian built.

JCC in Tbilisi August 9-10

15. (C) Reeve said that the sides have agreed to a JCC

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meeting at OSCE's premises in Tbilisi August 9-10, and the OSCE will try to get the sides to agree on demilitarization steps and keeping the bypass roads free of blockades. The last road blockade around Avnevi by the JPKF was "very tense" according to Reeve, and could have easily escalated. The Georgians have strengthened their position around Avenvi, building professional trenches, with platforms for mortars, and laying anti-personnel mines. Reeve said he thought Avnevi would likely be the "flashpoint" for any future confrontation between the South Ossetians and Georgians, as it was in 2004, but noted that unlike 2004, any armed clash would quickly spread to other areas within the zone of conflict. Reeve said that an agreement on placement of additional OSCE observers, which he hoped would come soon, would double OSCE's capacity to monitor the conflict zone. Reeve added that they will also bring OSCE one step closer to a permanent monitoring post at Didi Gupta.

16. (C) DAS Bryza asked Reeve if it was time for negotiations to move into the third phase of political settlement. Reeve replied that it was, but the problem would be the inclusivity of the process. He said that the Georgians have to slow down. They have made the right moves so far, but cannot resolve the issue in the next two months. He said the Georgians have not done enough to engage the ethnic South Ossetian communities, which will not be easy and requires more time. He believed support for Sanakoyev is limited primarily to the Georgian-controlled villages. Because he is closely identified with the Georgian government in Tbilisi, Reeve said, it is easy for Kokoiti to discredit him.

17. (U) DAS Bryza cleared this cable.
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